



La Voz

Newsletter of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic
Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

April 2004

We Are Getting Close

*By Carmen Ortiz
Chair, Conference
Planning Committee*

We are rapidly approaching our training conference, June 22-24, 2004. I hope that by now you have checked out the draft program. We are offering many excellent workshops and speakers. From the highly technical, such as ArcGIS, to sessions on personal development, such as Alternative Dispute Resolution, we hope this conference will help you meet your training needs. The tour will be a great way to see how conservation is done in California.

Sacramento is especially vibrant in June. The weather is warm, but not too hot, and dry. The delta breeze cools down

the evenings and invites you to come out and take a stroll. You may want to walk down to Old Sacramento, the historic district, along the Sacramento River. If you are a train buff, visit the Railroad Museum. You can also walk to the Crocker Museum or La Raza Galería Posada, a Latin American gallery/museum. And don't forget the State Capitol (you may get a glimpse of the new governor!), which has an excellent exhibit of California history. Great restaurants, shopping...

Ok, back to business! There are several **very important** dates to remember:

- Scholarship Applications were due April 15.

- Awards Nominations are due April 30.

- Early Registration is due May 1.

- Elections Nominations are due **May 3**.

- Hotel reservation must be made no later than June 1.

Just a quick note about the registration: you may use the government purchase credit card, but not your government travel card to pay for your registration.

Make sure you visit our website to obtain the latest information on the June conference at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/>. Check regularly as new information is posted regularly.

I look forward to seeing you in June in Sacramento!

Inside this issue:

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Vacancy Announcements

Some positions of the National Council will be expiring June of 2004. Nominations for these vacancies are open for 2004-2006 service year. If you are interested in running or submitting a nomination for one of the following positions, this is your opportunity.

President, Executive Vice President, or Secretary

Regional Representative for:
Northern Plains, Midwest, Northeast, or Caribbean Area

Do not miss this opportunity! To submit your name or nominate a colleague!



Candidate for Midwest Regional Representative

Astrid Martinez
is candidate for
Midwest
Regional
Representative
Position

I am announcing my candidacy for Regional Representative for the Midwest.

I am Astrid Martinez, soil conservationist in Oconto County, Wisconsin. I worked as a soil scientist for 6 years before I transferred to Wisconsin as soil conservationist in 2003. I have been a NOPHNRCSSE member since 1997, the year that I began to work with NRCS as a soil scientist in Greenfield, Massachusetts.

Adding to my career portfolio, I served as HEPM for the Tri State area (Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island) for 2 ½ years and as the East Regional HEPM for 1 year. I was awarded Outstanding HEPM in June

of 2003. I developed power point presentations for the Hispanic Heritage Month, which have been used by various HEPMs and it was posted on the NOPHNRCSSE website in 2003. I served as a member of the planning committee for the HEPM Training of June 2003 in Des Moines.

As a NOPHNRCSSE member, I have served in the communications and recruitment committees. I helped with the registration at the training conference in Massachusetts and Washington, DC. This year I am serving as a member of the conference planning committee.

In my free time, I like to spend quality time

with my daughter Rosario. We enjoy gymnastics, baseball, and hiking. Bird watching is one of the things we want to do this summer.

If you elected me as the Midwest representative, I will address your concerns regarding job placement and promotions. I will assist the agency in the hiring efforts of minorities, and I will work in with the National Council to reach the goals and mission of our organization.

I ask for your support and vote in the upcoming elections to become your Midwest Regional Representative. Vote for me and I will be there for you. You can count on me!

Mil Gracias,
Astrid Martinez

A Reminder About Your 2004 Membership Dues

*By Rachel Lopez,
Membership Chair*

2004 membership renewals continue to come in - Thank You!

Please remember when submitting your 2004 membership dues to complete and mail in the NOPHNRCSSE membership application with your check (available on our website). Checks can be directly forwarded to Zaragoza Rodriguez, treasurer, as long as a copy of the check is attached to the application that is mailed to me.

If you chose to have your membership dues paid by payroll deduction, please know that those deductions will not be applied to this year's dues, but applied to 2005 dues. To become current for 2004, you must submit a check for this year dues along with the payroll deduction form.

By being a current paid member, you can take advantage of the lower membership rate of \$275.00 for the three-day conference scheduled in June (cutoff date is May

1, 2004). Non-member registration cost for the three day conference is \$325.00.

A reminder to members who move:

Members are moving and forgetting to inform NOPHNRCSSE of the change. Now posted on the membership website is a change of address card. If you have moved in the last year, please complete this form and email it to me at Rachel.Lopez@ca.usda.gov.

I look forward to seeing and welcoming you all to CALIFORNIA!



2004 Election Process

In accordance with article X of the constitution, the nominations committee will be conducting the 2004 elections. The information that follows will serve as a guide on the procedure that we will use for this year's election process.

This year we will be conducting elections for the Office of President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary, and the Regional Representatives for Northern Plains, Midwest, Northeast and the Caribbean Area. Anyone with current Charter, Regular, Life, or Institution membership in the organization shall be eligible to vote in any election of officers and regional representatives. Honorary members do not have the right to hold office or vote.

Submit
nominations
for officer
vacancies.

Nominator and Voter Eligibility

1. Person nominating or voting must be a member in good standing.
2. Nominees must be members in good standing.
3. Regional Representatives will be nominated and voted on by membership of the region represented only.
4. Member in good standing: NOPHNRCSE members with **dues paid** and members that participated in payroll allotment **in 2003**, and reported by the Membership Committee to the Nominations Committee Chair as of **March 31, 2004**.
5. Member's name, address, email, telephone and region **must appear on the ballot**. If this information is missing the ballot will be considered invalid.

Nomination and Voting Procedure

1. All NOPHNRCSE members in good standing can nominate and vote for President, Executive Vice President, and Secretary. This year we will be voting for the Regional Representatives of the Northern Plains, Midwest, Northeast and Caribbean Area.
2. To write-in a candidate, place a mark (X) by the write-in blank and write the name of the candidate on the line of the ballot form. To be an eligible write-in candidate, the candidate must be a member in good standing.
3. Nomination Form and Voting Ballot shall be mailed or faxed to the Nominations Committee Chair by the designated due date that appears on the form/ballot.

(See nominations form on page 4.)

Carlos E. Hernandez, Nominations Committee Chair
PO Box 1971
Mayaguez, PR 00681-1971
Tel: 787.264.1912 Ext 7796
Fax: 787.264.1917
Email: chernandez@sg.inter.edu



Elections Nomination Form 2004

Due Date: May 3, 2004

**Nominations
Form for 2004**

President Name of Candidate:	Executive Vice-President Name of Candidate:
Secretary Name of Candidate:	

Regional Representative - Northern Plains Name of Candidate:	Regional Representative - Midwest Name of Candidate:
Regional Representative - Northeast Name of Candidate:	Regional Representative - Caribbean Area Name of Candidate:

Nominator: _____

Region: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Nominator signature: _____ Date: _____

Please ask the person being nominated if they are a member in good standing and if they accept the nomination before submitting the name.

Mail or Fax to: Carlos E. Hernandez
PO Box 1971
Mayaguez, PR 00681-1971
Fax: (787) 264-1927



Tips for Preparation and Delivery of Technical Presentations

Tips for Preparing and Delivering Technical Presentations

Initial Questions to ask the Workshop/Conference Coordinator

1. What would you like me to present? What questions would you like me to answer? What specific issues would you like me to address and what would you like me to avoid?
2. How long should my presentation be? How much flexibility do I have?
3. Please describe the audience; how many? What is their background and expertise? What range of expertise is represented in the audience? Do you expect an outspoken group where I should anticipate a lot of questions or even debate?
4. Is there a speaker before or after me that I should coordinate with?
5. Do you expect handouts? Discourage handouts? Should I submit any handouts prior to the meeting date?
6. Is the equipment I need available onsite, or should I bring my own? How dark does the room get? How are the acoustics (will I be using a microphone?)
7. How formal is the presentation? What's appropriate dress?
8. Do you have preferences regarding how I handle questions (i.e. respond during the presentation or at the conclusion).
9. Would you like a short bio for introductions?

****If the presentation is relatively long (>1-2 hours?) and where it's appropriate, consider teaming up with a fellow specialist to make the presentation; you're giving someone else an opportunity to participate, you're breaking the monotony, and you're introducing your audience to another contact with a different perspective. ****

Putting Together the Presentation

1. Start with an outline that lists the major topics that you plan to cover. The outline can be written, or it can consist of temporary 'divider' slides in a Power Point© presentation.
2. Start to fill in the outline by inserting text slides. At this stage, don't worry about style or how much text to insert into a slide- just capture your thoughts and start thinking about the flow. Post questions or ideas for follow-up. You can reformat, hide, or even delete these slides later.
3. Once you have a sense of the 'flow', reevaluate the overall content of the presentation and adjust to fit timeframes, audience, and your objectives. Don't be afraid to cut out (or temporarily hide) sections or topics if you're concerned about the timing or if it starts to appear unwieldy; the simpler the message, the easier it will be to establish flow and communicate effectively to your audience.
4. Now you're ready to fill in the presentation with the actual slide copy-
 - a. Choose a background style and color. Keep it simple, and take into account how dark the room where you're presenting will get.
 - b. Take one section at a time, and fill in slides to convey your message. Always watch for flow.
 - c. Avoid slides that are heavy with text, and don't have too many text slides in a row. Where possible, use limited text with graphics in lieu of bulleted text.
 - d. Try following up on new concepts or terms with some sort of example- a photo, another graphic, a personal anecdote. What else?

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5. The internet is a great source of information, photos, and graphics. Search, search, search, but always adhere to copyright laws and include webpage addresses/source citations in your slide copy (even if you treat it as a hidden slide that shows up on the handouts).
6. Carefully insert humor into the presentation- not too much, not mean or improper.
7. Once the presentation is pretty much shaped up, use the animation and slide transition functions to optimize flow.
8. Reduce the likelihood of mechanical problems by making a backup of the final presentation using different formats. For example, burn a CD, load it onto the hard drive of your laptop, and make handouts of your slide copy.
9. Handouts are great, but don't overload your audience either. Handouts with your slide copy and room for notes are excellent.
10. Practice! Consider a dry run in front of a few friendly coworkers and heed their recommendations.

Delivering the Presentation

1. Arrive early.
2. Set up the equipment, make sure everything is compatible, and that you can see the presentation on the screen. Watch the formatting and font size- sometimes different computers will read files slightly differently.
3. Bring a laser pointer.
4. Have drinking water or some other drink nearby, especially if you have a cold!
5. Visit with the workshop coordinator and members of the audience as they arrive- friendly chat stuff.
6. Be polite- listen to people's questions, repeat the questions for the rest of the audience, and wrap up by asking if you've answered their question sufficiently. Follow up one-on-one with those seeking additional information or clarification. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" and "thank you."
7. Relax and have fun as much as possible- most audiences don't want to bite off your head.

National Federal Women's Program Manager

Sharyn C. Alvarez became the National Federal Women's Program Manager on March 8, 2004.

The National Federal Women's Program Manager is a full-time position in the Office of Civil Rights, directed by Andrew Johnson, Jr.

Sharyn joined the civil rights staff in Beltsville, MD ending six years of service in legislative affairs.

The NRCS federal women's program consists of 54 collateral-duty federal women's program managers in the field.

"I am very interested in hearing from you," says Sharyn. "I can read reports and review statistics but in order to know what is really happening with women's lives in NRCS I need to about it from women."

You can reach Sharyn at 301-504-2338 or email sharyn.alvarez@usda.gov.



More Conference Information

The Conservation Tour is being organized by two NOPHNRCSE members. Teresa Velasquez, Civil Engineer, design regional team at the state office, who was a former member of the "Wetland Team" in the Elkgrove field office. She provided me with all the contacts for the Cosumnes River Preserve Tour. She is also working on a nice tour handout.

My name is Arturo Carvajal, water management specialist engineer and I'm working on the Yolo County part of the tour. In cooperation with other NRCS staff from Yolo and Sacramento counties and other NRCS partners we will provide two options during the tour:

Information on Conservation Tours

1. Visit to three growers in Yolo County, who developed conservation plans. They implemented some of the conservation practices and will include additional practices in the future. We have lined up three growers: Lewis Butler, Roy Parcell and John Anderson. Here is what you will see at John Anderson's Hedgerow Farm:
 - John Anderson - Mr. Anderson is a recognized steward of land and water in Yolo County, who advocates the use of native grasses for several conservation practices. He is a native grass seed producer. Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) in the south of the property on marginal soils. NRCS partners include US Fish & Wildlife Service and Yolo County Public Works. Wetlands and ponds installed with past ACP funds. Practices include:
 - Tailwater ponds with sediment traps
 - Riparian habitat
 - Tree and shrub establishment
 - Roadside native perennial grass establishment
 - Hedgerows
 - Wetland restoration and wildlife habitat establishment
2. Visit to the Cosumnes River Preserve and organic rice fields in Sacramento County. Here is a brief description of the Preserve that many of you will visit:
 - NOPHNRCSE participants will have the opportunity to visit the Cosumnes River Preserve, which holds a very special place among California landscapes. The Cosumnes River is the last "undammed" river flowing from the Sierra Nevada mountain range into the great Central Valley. The Preserve is dedicated to safeguarding and restoring the finest remaining example of a California valley oak riparian (streamside) ecosystem and its surrounding habitats, and restoring freshwater wetlands to increase the Pacific Flyway's populations of migratory waterfowl. Only minutes from the State Capitol, the Cosumnes River Preserve is a great example of how human uses like agriculture, recreation and education can be compatible with the natural environment.